



Writing Community: Wits Writing Festival

26-28 March 2024

Wits Writing Centre, Wartenweiler Library
Humanities Graduate Centre

A festival of writing, featuring book and zine launches, writing workshops, panel discussions, and a Dante Festival on 28 March.



Wits Writing Festival: Writing Community

Tuesday, 26 March and Wednesday, 27 March 2024

Venues: Wits Writing Centre (ground floor of Wartenweiler Library) and the Humanities Graduate Centre.

This year's festival features among others the poet-activist Diana Ferrus, the novelist Anni Domingo, the Ukrainian poet Oksana Kutsenko, two scholars from Bard College in the United States, a screening of Wits Writing Programme alumnus' Roberta Hunt's documentary *Sista in the Brotherhood*, a reading from teenagers from Hillbrow of their version of Aime Cesaire's *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* as well as poetry from Phillipa Yaa de Villiers and launches of books by Farai Mudzingwa, David Mann, Nompumelelo Radebe and Zethu Cakata, and contributing author, Kebotlhale Motseothata.

Join us for workshops on storytelling and listening, panels on integrating writing with learning, writing black, writing the city, reimagining history, publishing zines and the library and research.

Welcome to Writing Community: Wits Writing Festival 2024

Last year's festival brought together people across the Wits Writing Programme, connected them with others both within the university and beyond, to develop fresh conversations and practical ideas for how to promote writing as thinking. The success of the festival led to the decision to create an annual festival to foster such collaborations.

This year's theme, Writing Community, is presented as both a noun and a process. As a noun, a writing community; as a verb, writing to create a community, writing (and reading) as momentary fusion or community between reader/ audience and writer. We wish to both acknowledge existing writing communities, and to explore the process of creating new community, be it between writer and reader, writer and subject, or individual and group.

This year we are fortunate to include two important writers whose work reimagines history and seeks to recreate community. The poet-activist Diana Ferrus speaks for the forgotten and oppressed. Her poetry has moved governments to begin to return that which was stolen in the past. We shall also be welcoming – though sadly only online - Anni Domingo, whose work in community with Diana's, restores voice and memory. We also warmly welcome two visiting scholars from Bard College in the United States and from the Open Society University Network, Dr Jennifer-Risko and Professor Guy Risko, working with writing and access to Higher Education. They will offer two hybrid online sessions which will offer a global discussion around writing centres and writing research.

We shall also endeavour to create writing community through workshops, including a storytelling workshop with Dr Nomsa Mdlalose; a listening workshop with all the Wits writing centres; a workshop for communities led by Diana Ferrus; a workshop led by a student-initiated writing group; and a workshop about writing the city with the author Barbara Adair working with Nelisiwa Mofutsanyana.

Our panels look to ways to connect. They include a panel on ways to integrate writing with learning in Writing Intensive courses; on Writing Black with the poet Jaki Seroke in conversation with Black Praxis convenor Thabang Manyike; a discussion about reimagining history with Diana Ferrus and Anni Domingo and myself; as well as how to publish postgraduate research with Mr Lazarus Matizirofa, the Associate Director of Research, Scholarly Communications, Digital Systems and Services, Wartenweiler Library. Zines as potentially a radical alternative to traditional publishing will be discussed by Newwork24, from Wits School of the Arts, who will showcase their 8 publications and collectives. Newwork24 zines are available for sale in the foyer.

We also have screenings and readings. An award-winning documentary, *Sista in the Brotherhood*, will be screened and discussed by its producer and WWC alumnus, Roberta Hunte, now Assistant Professor, Portland State University, United States. Teenagers from Hillbrow will read their version of Aime Cesaire's *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, a project initiated by the Windybrow Teenagers, Gerard Bester and Stacy Hardy Head of Creative Writing at Wits. The Ukrainian poet, Oksana Kutsenko, will join us online with *Reasons to Stay in Touch*.

We are hosting the launches of four wonderful new books. On March 26 at 19.00, *Avenues by Train*, the latest novel of Farai Mudzingwa, and also, *Once Removed* a collection of short stories written by David Mann, recent graduate of the Wits MA in Creative Writing Programme. On March 27 at 18.30, will see the early evening launch of the book *Still to be Named: An exploration of African Epistemologies using Simphiwe Dana's selected works* by Nompumelelo Radebe and Zeithu Cakata; as well as the launch of *She Will Struggle: Revolutionary Women Who Shaped the World*, presented by contributing author Kebotlhale Motseothata.

Our second day will be completed with poems performed by Diana Ferrus and Philippa Yaa De Villiers.

The third day, March 28, will be devoted to a Dante festival, presented by the departments of Italian and English with contributions from the department of Sign Language. The day will be held exclusively in the Humanities Graduate Centre seminar room. Our first two days will be held in the morning in the Wits Writing Centre, and after lunch, in the Humanities Graduate Centre seminar room, benefiting from their screening facilities, before returning to the Wits Writing Centre for supper at 18.00 and book launches.

We are grateful to Xarra Books who will be selling work by participating authors in the foyer, and to the students of the Creative Writing department who have mounted a display in the foyer about their creative writing processes. We are also very grateful to Bard's Institute for Writing and Thinking (IWT) for partnering with us on this programme, as well as our now well-established collaborator, the department of Creative Writing at Wits.

We hope that you will enjoy the festival!



Prof Pamela Nichols is an Associate Professor and head of the Wits Writing Programme. Her PhD in Comparative Literature (New York University) was guided by the work of Edward Said. Said's understanding of the institutionalization of knowledge as well as her experiences of working with major writing teachers in the US, influenced her establishment of the Wits Writing Centre (WWC) in 1998. Nichols also spear-headed Writing Intensive courses at Wits, through the Wits Writing Programme (WWP), formalised in 2018. Her recent publications have focussed on listening, the development of the citizen scholar, and the deepening of critical thinking within WI courses.

Day 1 | Tuesday, 26 March

9:00h Wits Writing Centre (WWC)

Welcome

Prof Nicole De-Wett Billings

Prof Pamela Nichols

9:30-11:00h WWC

Telling Stories

Dr Nomsa Mdlaose

Nearly all of our research involves storytelling. How can indigenous storytelling inform and enrich research narratives?

11:00-12:00h WWC

Listening to Learning

Prof Pamela Nichols, Dr Jean Moore, Mr Mark Hayter

Listening to thinking is the central activity of writing centre work. After an exercise to demonstrate the effect on listening on the writing process, there will be a group discussion across all the writing centres at Wits about what constitutes good listening.

12:00-13:00h WWC

Writing Black

A discussion between Mr Jaki Seroke and Thabang Manyike about writing during the 1970s Staffrider period and black writing now.

13:00-14:00h WWC

Lunch

14:00-15:00h Humanities Graduate Centre (HGC)

Writing in the Community

A workshop with Diana Ferrus

15:00-16:00h HGC (Zoom)

Reimagining History

Diana Ferrus and Anni Domingo in conversation with Pamela Nichols

Dickens on Slavery: A Conversation: <https://vimeo.com/481665679>

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://wits-za.zoom.us/j/5722035859?pwd=Y3F1endOdXc5K0NKKzBmRW9Sdz1dz09&omn=97105417066>

16:30-17:30h HGC (Zoom)

International Writing Centre Conversations

Open Society University Network meeting hosted by Dr Jennifer Sweeney-Risko

OSUN WC Meeting-Wits @ Tue 26 Mar 2024 4:30pm - 5:30pm

<https://bard.zoom.us/j/7064102454?pwd=UnBWUjFRb2s4alhhQ1RIUTFwMUp1dz09>

Day 1 | Tuesday, 26 March

17:30-18:30h HGC (Zoom)

Alumnus Presentation: *Sista in the Brotherhood*

Professor Roberta Hunte will screen and discuss the making of her award-winning documentary *Sista in the Brotherhood*.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://pdx.zoom.us/j/88172089851>
Meeting ID: 881 7208 9851

Sista in the Brotherhood is a 20-minute, narrative, short film about a black tradeswoman who faces discrimination on a new job site and who must choose between making a stand or keeping her job. The story follows apprentice carpenter (Sidony O'Neal) who struggles to prove herself on her first day at a new job site. An outlier in a white, male-dominated workforce, she's forced to navigate the crew's reactions to her. When tensions arise, she receives inspiration from a surprising source to help her decide to either make a stand or risk never being recognized as the skilled worker she has become. Inspired by doctoral thesis of Dr Roberta Hunte entitled "My walk has never been average: Black tradeswomen negotiating intersections of race and gender in long term careers in the United States."



18:30-19:00h WWC Supper

19:00-20:30h WWC Book Launches

Farai Mudzingwa: *Avenues by Train* (Cassava Republic Press)

When seven-year-old Jedza witnesses a tragic incident involving a train and the death of his close boyhood friend in his hometown Miner's Drift, he is convinced that his life is haunted. Now in his mid-20s, Jedza is a down-and-out electrician, moving to Harare in the hopes that he will escape the darkness and superstitions of the small town. But living in the shadowy restless atmosphere of the Avenues with its mysterious pools of water rising under musasa trees, he is tormented by the disappearance of his sister and their early encounters with ancestral spirits, the shapeshifting power of the njuzu and a vengeful ngozi. To move forward, he must stop running away and confront the trauma of his past. An eclectic, experimental novel, *Avenues By Train* is a brash and confident debut by an exciting new voice.



David Mann: *Once Removed* (Botsotso)

Once Removed is a collection of short, subtly interlinked stories inspired by the South African art world. With their unique views into high-end galleries, crumbling museums, imminent art fairs and out-of-work critics, the stories in this collection explore the idea of having one's life changed, in ways both profound and banal, through novel encounters with art and performance.



Day 2 | Wednesday, 27 March

9:00-9:45h WWC

Writing Group Exchange

Annabel Nyongwana, Nokukhanya Sibanda, and Alyssa Fischer will discuss the origins of their writing group and how the exchange of writing, ideas, and energy has helped each member to navigate their own writing journey.

9:45-10:30h Wits Library OLA (Open Learning Area)

The Library and Research

Mr Lazarus Matizirofa, Associate Director of Research, Scholarly Communications, Digital Systems and Services at Wartenweiler Library.

11:00h-12:00h Wits Library OLA (Open Learning Area)

Learning with Writing

Prof Liz Brenner, Dr Jean Moore, Dr Nosipho Mngomezulu, Dr Leyya Hoosen, Prof Zimitri Erasmus, Mr. Stephen Pentz, Dr Boitumelo Moletsane, Dr Wacango Kimani

Integrating writing with learning is a key feature of Writing Intensive courses. This panel will discuss both writing learning paths across courses, as well as within a course. Practical strategies will be offered.

12:15-13:00h WWC

Writing the City

Nelisiwe Mofutsanyana and Barbara Adair will present an interactive experience of Barbara's recent book *In the Shadow of the Springs I Saw*.

13:00-14:00h WWC

Lunch

14:00-15:00h WWC

Notebook of a Long Day's Journey into a Hillbrow Night by Césaire Youth

What would Aimé Césaire's classic anticolonial long poem *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* look like if it were written today by teenagers living in Hillbrow? Join the Windybrow Teenagers, Gerard Bester and Wits Creative Writing for a reading and discussion on the making of *Notebook of a Long Day's Journey into a Hillbrow Night* by Césaire Youth.

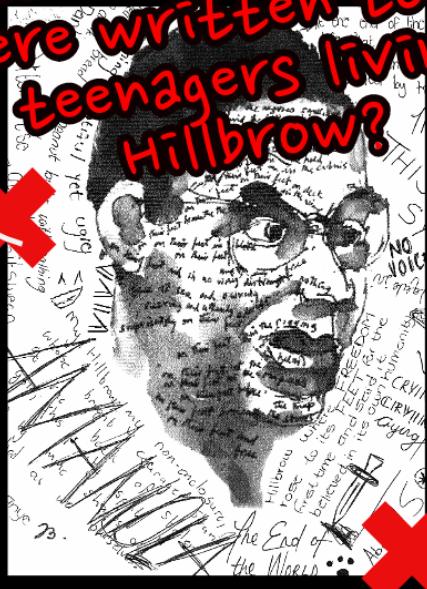
Césaire Youth is the Windybrow Teenagers with Stacy Hardy, Nhlanhla Mahlangu, Lesego Ram-polokeng, Tamara Guhrs, Sibahle Mangena, Khethukuthula Jele, Pule kaJanolintji et al. The project is created by The Windybrow Arts Centre and the Wits Creative Writing Department, with support from The Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society at the University of Chicago and The Centre for the Less Good Idea.

15:00-16:00h WWC

Publishing Zines

NEWWORK24, Editorial/ communication committee Mabontle, Eva, Sakhwiwo, Rotondwa and Ra from the Wits School of Arts discuss their network of 8 publications and collectives.

what would Aimé
césaire's anticolonial
poem sound like if it
were written today,
by teenagers living in
Hillbrow?



02:30PM
27 March

Wits
Writing
Centre

SLLM
SCHOOL OF LITERATURE,
LANGUAGE AND MEDIA

The Wits Writing Festival invite you to
a reading and discussion on the making of
**Notebook of a Long Day's
Journey into a Hillbrow
Night**
by Césaire Youth

Created by The Windybrow Arts Centre and the
Wits Creative Writing Department, With support
from The Neubauer Collegium for Culture and The
Society at the University of Chicago and The
Centre for the Less Good Idea.



20+



WITS WRITING FESTIVAL
Wartenweiler Library

A festival of writing, featuring book and zine launches, writing workshops, panel discussions, and Dane Festival on 28th March

Umshini is a group of Fine Art students who came together in creative response to the on-going student protests that arise at the start of each academic year. Umshini is made up of 8 collectives, namely Paper Jam, MOVE!, Hoops, Phetoho, Outcast, It's Weird, TSC and Ts & Cs.

As part of the third-year Drawing and Contemporary Practice course in 2023, facilitated and guided by Rangoato Hlasane, the collectives developed 8 unique publications that explore collective self-publishing methodologies. The group worked closely with the Medu Art En-

semble historical poster archive to explore publishing in times of protest. Each publication comes to life using Risograph printing, a fast and cost-effective way to generate large volumes of work, and explores a network of what it means to be young artists working in our current temporality. The work has travelled between Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and New York and we now find ourselves at the Wits Writing Centre to explore the ways in which self-publishing can be a call to movement, self-expression and connection.

Day 2 | Wednesday, 27 March

16:30-17:30h HGC

International Writing Research

Neka da Costa and Fouad Asfour in conversation with Dr Jennifer Sweeney- Risko.

The Center for Liberal Arts and Sciences Pedagogy (CLASP), a project of the Bard College Institute for Writing & Thinking (IWT) will host a discussion of the research of two International Writing Fellows, based at Wits.

17:30h HGC

My Reasons to Stay in Touch

Poetry by Oksana Kutsenko (online via Zoom:

<https://wits-za.zoom.us/j/92406844387?pwd=eXMzbk1TNWI1V0VwQ2Z6R2xDWEowQT09>

18:45- 19:00h WWC

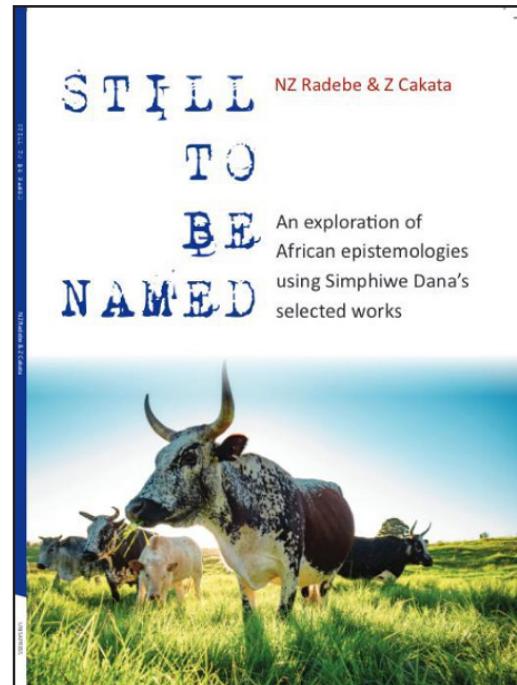
Supper

19.00- 20.30 WWC

Book Launches

Nompumelelo Radebe and Zethu Cakata, *Still to be Named: An exploration of African Epistemologies using Simphiwe Dana's selected works.* (UNISA Press)

In this book, the authors discuss some of Simphiwe Dana's songs from the decolonial perspective which has gained traction in academic circles, especially after the fallist movement. *Still to be named: An exploration of African epistemologies using Simphiwe Dana's selected works* is a call for Africans to go back to their roots by denouncing Western ways of life and begin to embrace African epistemologies and ontologies that were destroyed by colonisation and Western imperialism. The authors advocate for the restoration of land and wealth of Africans after being dispossessed of these resources by ruthless colonists who will at times forcefully move people from fertile land and dispossess them their livestock in the process. This has forced Africans to abandon indigenous ways of living by producing their own food to become migrant labourers which has led to the disintegration of African families as they were forced to support the capitalist economy. The book unveils that songs are a way of invoking healing to the soul and challenges readers to rebuild themselves from the damage caused by colonialism. The authors reveal that Simphiwe Dana's music and literary art are underpinned by Black Consciousness as espoused by Biko and decolonialism as coined by Ngugi Wa Thion'go among others. The authors lament that racism and colonialism are still rife despite democratic governments in Africa which still perpetuate structural systems of colonialism and fail to effectively redress the injustices of the past. The book contributes to constructive discussions on decoloniality and it is hoped that it will make meaningful impact in changing the current status quo.

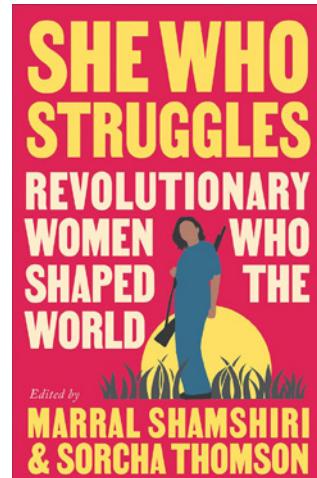


<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Unisa-Press/Books/Humanities-and-Social-Sciences/Still-to-Be-Named>

Day 2 | Wednesday, 27 March

Kebotlhale Motseothata, author of the chapter "Lindiwe Mabuza: Culture as a Weapon of Resistance in South Africa" in: *She Who Struggles: Revolutionary Women Who Shaped the World*. PlutoPress.

Rosa Luxemburg, Claudia Jones and Leila Khaled may have joined Lenin, Mao and Che in the pantheon of twentieth century revolutionaries, but the histories in which they figure remain unjustly dominated by men. *She Who Struggles* sets the record straight, revealing how women have contributed to revolutionary movements across the world in endless ways: as leaders, rebels, trailblazers, guerrillas and writers; revolutionaries who also navigated their gendered roles as women, mothers, wives and daughters. Through exclusive interviews and original historical research, including primary sources never before translated into English, readers are introduced to largely unknown revolutionary women from across the globe. The collection ultimately presents a hidden history of revolutionary internationalism that will be a must read for activists engaging in feminist, anticolonial and antiracist struggle today.



<https://www.plutobooks.com/9780745348247/she-who-struggles/>

20.30 WWC

Poems to temporarily conclude: Diana Ferrus and Phillipa Yaa de Villiers

A poem for Sarah Baartman by Diana Ferrus

I've come to take you home –
home, remember the veld?
the lush green grass beneath the big oak trees
the air is cool there and the sun does not burn.

I have made your bed at the foot of the hill,
your blankets are covered in buchu and mint,
the proteas stand in yellow and white
and the water in the stream chuckle sing-songs
as it hobbles along over little stones.

I have come to wrench you away –
away from the poking eyes
of the man-made monster
who lives in the dark
with his clutches of imperialism
who dissects your body bit by bit
who likens your soul to that of Satan
and declares himself the ultimate god!

I have come to soothe your heavy heart
I offer my bosom to your weary soul
I will cover your face with the palms of my hands
I will run my lips over lines in your neck
I will feast my eyes on the beauty of you
and I will sing for you
for I have come to bring you peace.

I have come to take you home
where the ancient mountains shout your name.
I have made your bed at the foot of the hill,
your blankets are covered in buchu and mint,
the proteas stand in yellow and white –

I have come to take you home
where I will sing for you
for you have brought me peace
for you have brought us peace.

Find Diana Ferrus performing the poem here:

<https://youtu.be/-pCmu4uyj5c>

<https://harpandsoul.bandcamp.com/track/ive-come-to-take-you-home>

Biographies



Barbara Adair is a novelist and writer. *In Tangier we Killed the Blue Parrot* was shortlisted for the Sunday Times Fiction Award in 2004. Her novel *End* was shortlisted for Africa Regional Commonwealth Prize. She contributed to *Queer Africa* and *Queer Africa 2*, and her writing, particularly her travel writing, has been widely published in literary magazines and anthologies. She is currently working with the Wits Writing Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand. In 2022 she received a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Pretoria.



Fouad Asfour works in collaborative frameworks across publications, exhibitions, performance and research projects. He has contributed to numerous contemporary art and research projects and is IWT CLASP Writing Fellow at Bard College. He is a PhD candidate at WSOA where he researches silences of first languages in the borderlands of writing through multi-modal translanguaging practices. He holds an MA in Linguistics, and an MA in Creative Writing. He received the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory working grant in 2008.



Prof Liz Brenner is a Biochemist who joined the University of the Witwatersrand at the beginning of 1983 and, until her retirement, taught students ranging from first years to B.Sc. (Honours) level as well as supervising post-graduate students. Liz, who is passionate about student support, was awarded an M Ed degree (with distinction) in 2009. Her research project "The extent to which actual development creates the conditions for potential development in Vygotsky's ZPD", reflects some of her current research interests, which are focussed on conditions for enhancing learning, and the implementation of transformative pedagogies that promote engagement and critical thinking. She was awarded the Vice Chancellor's most distinguished individual teacher award at Wits University and was a recipient of the National Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award (CHE and HELTSA) in 2010. Liz was the assistant dean: teaching and learning in the Faculty of Science at Wits University from October 2017 until her retirement from Wits at the end of December 2019. During this period, she also headed the "Science Students Success" team. Amongst the initiatives she introduced into the Faculty of Science is a postgraduate short course, "Scientific Thinking and Scientific Writing". In January 2020, she joined the postgraduate school at the University of Johannesburg as academic head of the Diploma in Postgraduate Research Supervision and was acting head of the Research Capacity Development Unit from August 2020 to December 2021. In 2022, and again in 2024, she has project-managed the "Gateway to Success" (GTS) Programme for first year students. This year, she also coordinated the writing fellows in the GTS online Climate Change and Me course. In 2022, she was appointed a consultant for the supervisor development project from August to December and has been teaching the MCBG1001A course for part-time students since 2022. In August 2023, she was appointed in the Faculty of Health Sciences to help design the new Integrated Sciences course for first year MBBCh students which is being implemented this year.



Zethu Cakata currently works as a Full Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of South Africa. She has extensive experience in the field of research and has worked as both an academic and a researcher in several institutions including, Statistics South Africa, Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria and Human Sciences Research Council, Reproductive Health Research Unit and the University of the Western Cape. Zethu Cakata's scholarship is in the field of African Epistemologies and has produced work that advocates for the usage of indigenous languages for epistemic purposes. She has demonstrated this advocacy in publications such as: *The place of indigenous languages in the new curriculum: An African Psychology Case Study; Safely Nested in isiXhosa is the Psychology of a people; When Ukucelwa Uku-*

Biographies

zalwa Becomes Bride Price: Spiritual Meaning Lost in Translation; Ubugqirha: Healing Beyond the Western Gaze; South Africa Belongs to All Who Speak Colonial Languages; and Childhoods Rooted in Land. This work has earned her the Unisa Scholarship Award in 2022 and the Association for Black Psychologists Scholarship Award in 2019. She has recently published books titled: *Still to be Named: An exploration of African Epistemologies using Simphiwe Dana's selected works* and *Azibuye Emasisweni: Re-claiming our space, centering our knowledge*.

Césaire Youth is the Windybrow Teenagers with Stacy Hardy, Nhlanhla Mahlangu, Lesego Rampolokeng, Tamara Guhrs, Sibahle Mangena, Khethukuthula Jele, Pule ka-Janolintji et al. The project is created by The Windybrow Arts Centre and the Wits Creative Writing Department, with support from The Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society at the University of Chicago and The Centre for the Less Good Idea.



Néka Da Costa (she/her) is a theatre-maker, collaborator and academic at the Theatre and Performance department at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has an MA in Text and Performance from Birkbeck University of London and RADA. She is currently studying towards a PhD at the Wits School of Arts in which she intends to design and mobilise a radical pedagogy in Theatre and Performance which prioritises disabled students and centralises difference to create inclusive access in the university space. As a creative researcher, Néka is interested in the dynamics of theatre and inclusivity in all its permutations: economic access, physical access, linguistic access and access in terms intersectional representation, politics and power dynamics. She is delighted to be a part of the 2024 Writing Festival as a South African representative of the CLASP Fellowship Programme.



Prof Nicole De-Wett Billings, PhD, is the Senior Director: Academic Affairs. She is a Professor in the Demography and Population Studies department, and was the Acting Head of the School of Social Sciences, and co-Assistant Dean for Research in the Faculty of Humanities, at the University of the Witwatersrand. She is a Female Academic Leadership Fellow (FALF) and the Consortium for Advanced Research and Training in Africa (CARTA) graduate. Her research interest is in the challenges that compromise transitions to adulthood among adolescents and youth in South Africa. She is an invited commissioner on the upcoming Lancet Commission for Adolescent Health. She has over 65 journal publications and has successfully supervised more than 30 Master of Arts (MA) and two doctoral students. In 2016 she was the South African Department of Science and Technology (DST) Women in Science first runner up in the Young Distinguished Women in Humanities and Social Sciences category. In 2018, De Wet-Billings' was named one of the Mail and Guardian's Top 200 Young (under 35 years old) South Africans within the education category. She has held research grants from the DSI-NRF Center of Excellence in Human Development, the South African National Research Foundation (NRF), British Academy, the Mellon Mays foundation among others. She has served on editorial boards for several journals and is a past Head of Department, and Assistant Dean for Postgraduate Studies in the Faculty of Humanities.



Anni Domingo is an Actress, Director and Writer, working in Radio, TV, Films. and Theatre. She has appeared in many shows in the UK including in Inua Ellam's 'Three Sisters' set in Nigeria during the Biafran War, at the National Theatre. She has just finished touring Jane Austen's 'Mansfield Park'. She is currently Lecturing in Drama and directing at St. Mary's University in Twickenham, Rose Bruford College of Speech and Drama and at RADA. Anni's poems and short stories are published in various anthologies and her plays produced in the UK. Her first novel, *Breaking the Maafa Chain*, was published in



Biographies

2021 by Jacaranda Book in UK and Pegasus in USA last year. An extract from this novel won Myriad Editions First Novel competition and is one of the contributions in the New Daughters of Africa Anthology edited by Margaret Busby. Anni recently won a place at Hedgebrook Writers Retreat and Norwich National Writing Centre's 'Escalator' programme. Anni is now writing her second novel 'Ominira', as part of her PhD programme.



Hello, my name is **Zimitri Erasmus**, an Associate Professor in Anthropology at Wits University. My book, *Race Otherwise: Forging a New Humanism for South Africa* (2017), was nominated for two awards. It continues my scholarly engagement with commonsense notions that 'race' is self-evident, fixed, and permanent. *Race Otherwise* brings together my thinking about the ways that 'race' works. I am privileged to have received several international fellowships. I am here today because of my interest in innovative, socially just pedagogies that engage Writing Intensive and Epistolary methods. My most recent publication on this topic is 'Learning with Letters: epistolary pedagogy in anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand during the Covid-19 pandemic', *Anthropology Southern Africa* 2021, 44 (3). I am indebted to Ra for teaching me about Zines and to Pamela for a long learning relationship. Thank you for inviting me to Writing Community.



Diana Ferrus is a writer, poet, performance poet and storyteller. Her work has been published in various collections and some serve as prescribed texts for high school learners. Diana completed her Bachelors at the University of the Western Cape as well as a postgraduate degree in Women's and Gender Studies. In 2012 Diana received the inaugural Mbokodo Award for poetry. She has published 3 books, *Ons Komvandaan* in 2004, *I've come to take you home* in 2010, *Die vrede kom later* was launched on 27 July 2019. In 2020 Diana received "The freedom of the town" from the Breede River Valley Municipality in Worcester, her birthtown. In 2022 Diana received an honorary doctorate from the University of Stellenbosch. Diana is internationally known and acclaimed for the poem that she wrote for the indigenous South African woman Sarah Baartman who was taken away from her country under false pretences and paraded as a sexual freak in Europe. This poem touched the heart of the French Senate and upon hearing it they voted unanimously that her remains should come home. This poem is published in the French Law, a first in French History. Diana's work has had and still has a bearing and influence on matters of race, sex and reconciliation.



Stacy Hardy is a writer, researcher, and editor whose work explores the intersections of embodiment, the individual, and society. Her writing has appeared in various anthologies and journals including the *New Orleans Review*, *New Contrast*, *The Evergreen Review*, *Black Sun Lit*, and many more. She is the author of the short fiction collections *Because the Night* (Pocko, 2015) and *An Archaeology of Holes* (Rot-Bo-Krik, Paris 2022 and Bridge Books, Chicago, 2023). Her critically acclaimed plays and award-winning librettos have been performed globally, at venues and festivals such as the Aix-en-Provence Festival, France and the Royal Opera House in London. Hardy is an editor at the Pan-African platform *Chimurenga*; a visiting fellow at the Neubauer Collegium at the University of Chicago; a partner in the African creative writing teaching initiative Saseni; and a founder of Ukuthula, a project that develops new writing from and against gender-based violence. She has hosted interdisciplinary workshops and writing intensives in diverse locations, including Dakar, Kigali, Cairo, Tombwa (Angola), Nairobi, Lagos, Berlin, New York, and online, and facilitated graduate seminars and writing workshops worldwide. She teaches on the MA programme and convenes the Working Concepts in Creative Writing and Text & Image courses in the Honours programme.

Biographies

Mark Hayter served as the Executive Headmaster of Grayston Preparatory for nearly a decade. His expertise extends beyond educational leadership to active roles on the governing boards of several esteemed independent schools. A pioneer in educational technology, Mark has engineered numerous teaching platforms that harness the capabilities of Google and Office 365. In addition, he has masterminded websites and mobile applications that enhance school communication systems. His consultancy is sought after for its innovative approach to bolstering thinking skills, weaving technology into learning environments, and advancing educational methodologies in schools and corporate settings. In 2019, Mark enriched the WsoE team with his tutelage, and subsequently, in 2020, he joined the Writing Centre. He has coordinated the Writing Centre for two years. Currently, Mark is spearheading the Integrated Academic Digital Development Programme within the School of Education, a testament to his unwavering commitment to academic excellence and digital advancement.



Dr Leyya Hoosen has her PhD in Socio-Cultural Anthropology, specialising in Digital and Critical Religion Anthropology, at the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research follows online women-led prayer groups in South Africa. She is interested in what it means to be a woman in Islam in SA in the digital age. Leyya explores alternate ways of engaging an Anthropology of Islam and the significant role that cyberspace and the virtual plays in allowing women in Islam to create and re-create counter publics that allow for expressions of Islam that resonate with their lived experiences. Leyya is a Wadsworth African Fellow, funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation, one of the leading international Anthropology funders. The scholarship supports PhD candidates who are exploring cutting-edge research in their respective fields of expertise.

Roberta Hunte is an Assistant Professor at Portland State University's School of Social Work. She received her M.S. in Conflict Resolution from PSU, and her doctorate from the University of Manitoba in Peace and Conflict Studies. She is an affiliate faculty in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Black Studies. Hunte is a community engaged Black feminist scholar, whose academic interests include sexual and reproductive justice, cultural work for social change, and how Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour navigate institutions: particularly construction, maternal healthcare, and higher education. Her creative critical scholarship includes the play *My Walk Has Never Been Average*, and short film *Sista in the Brotherhood*, both informed by her research with Black tradeswomen and devised theater piece entitled *We are BRAVE*, based on reproductive stories from people of colour and transgender people.

Dr Wacango Kimani is a Wits academic. An inclusive teacher and teacher educator who has pivoted into online teaching and entrepreneurship on YouTube.

Oksana Kutsenko is the author of three poetry collections and three books for children. Her poems, written in Ukrainian, have been translated into English and published in South African anthologies and literature magazines (*NATURALLY AFRICA*, *Love in the Time of COVID*, *Stanzas*). In South Africa, Oksana Kutsenko participated in the festivals Poetry Africa 2017, Poetry in McGregor 2019 and 2021, and WOMAD 2022.

David Mann is an award-winning writer, editor and arts journalist from Johannesburg, South Africa. His reviews and essays on art, as well as his short fiction, have appeared in journals and publications including Springerin (EU), Portside Review (AU) and Contemporary Lynx (UK). He currently works as the writer for The Centre for the Less Good Idea. *Once Removed* is his debut collection of short fiction.

Biographies



Thabang Manyike is a PhD candidate at the Political Studies department at Wits University. His research is based on emancipatory politics and revolutionary theories of change. Focusing on the Black and Islamic intellectual traditions in South Africa and the Muslim world particularly prioritizing African Muslim communities.



Lazarus Matizirofa is an Associate Director: Research, Scholarly Communication, Digital Systems & Services at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. He is a board member of the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD), an international organization that supports open-access publishing and preservation of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs). Lazarus is a member of the Confederation of Open Access Repositories (COAR) Next Generation Repositories Working Group. Lazarus was appointed as a member of the Technical Advisory Board on the African Open Science Platform (AOSP), and a Steering Committee member of the SA-EU Open Science Dialogue during his tenure at the National Research Foundation. He recently was also appointed by the NRF to serve as a member of the South African National CODATA Committee in 2023.



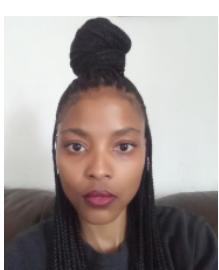
Dr Nomsa Mdlalose is a folklorist, researcher, writer, storyteller and social entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience in storytelling, creative writing, writing and publishing in South Africa and internationally. She is a published author amongst others of children's books, academic articles, and poetry. Mdlalose is the founder of the storytelling company Zintsomi and a founding member of Kwesukela storytelling Academy. She provides storytelling training, mentorship in art and business skills to community groups and individuals and designs storytelling programs. Dr Mdlalose holds a Storytelling Masters Degree from Tennessee State University in the USA and a Doctorate Degree in Folklore from Wits University, where she specialised in African oral Literature and Linguistics. She is the winner of the 2015 Imbokodo Award for the promotion of African languages and storytelling. She has sat on the literature panel of the National Arts Council of South Africa and Freedom Park Council and is currently a board member of the Southern African Folklore Society. Dr Mdlalose drew her initial cultural knowledge from her mother, S'bongile Dlamini, who is gifted in African spirituality and healing. <https://zintsomi.co.za>



Nelsiwe Mofutsanyana is a former consultant at the WWC, has supported the establishment and running of reading clubs and language support programmes mainly in schools, as well as libraries and literacy organisations. With a special interest in multi-modal approaches to literacy and multi-lingualism, she works in education strategy where partnerships and relationships complement and strengthen the work at the literature and basic education nexus.



Dr Boitumelo Moletsane lectures Mathematics at the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research interest is in Mathematical Analysis. She has participated in research projects that analyse PDEs using semigroups and eigenfunction expansion methods. She founded Math Poetry in 2023 as a community of inquiry that uses poetry to practise "social performance activities of Mathematics."



Kebotlhale Motseothata is a scholar, lecturer, writer, researcher, poet, human rights defender, feminist, Journalist, Mamandla fellow, SA History Workshop fellow and Mellon Mays fellow with an MA in African Literature. Motseothata's interests are gender and culture in the liberation movement of South Africa with a special interest in the Medu Art Ensemble, Dawn Magazine and the poetry produced by the women of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

Biographies

Dr Nosipho Mngomezulu holds a PhD in Social Anthropology from the university currently known as Rhodes University (2015). She is interested in contemporary youth identification practices in South Africa and Mauritius in the afterlife of slavery, focusing on three interrelated areas (1) how young people imagine the postcolonial nation, (2) intimacy and categorical identification and (3) anticolonial epistemologies. She is a Mandela Rhodes Scholar (2011), a former visiting fellow at MICA, Ahmedabad (India) (2016); and lectured critical race theory in the Stanford Bing Overseas Studies Program in Cape Town (2016-2019). Nosipho has worked as a lecturer at the University of Cape Town and is currently a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand. Nosipho co-host *The Academic Citizen* podcast (6 seasons). In 2020 she was named as one of the Mail and Guardian's Top 200 Young South Africans. In Winter 2022 she was a UMAPS visiting Fellow with the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and is currently a Research Fellow in Science Communication at Stellenbosch University, Journalism Department 2022-2025), their work featured in *Nature* in 2023. Nosipho has worked with Writing intensive pedagogy in her undergraduate and post graduate courses since 2018, with a special interest in academic poetics.



Dr Jean Moore is a language development, academic literacies, and English Additional Language (EAL) specialist, with a particular interest in education for social justice. For the past eight years, she has helped to run the Writing Centre at the Wits School of Law.



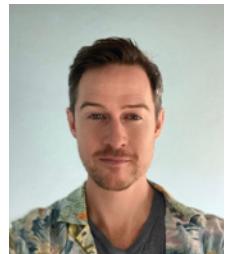
Farai Mudzingwa is a Zimbabwean writer whose debut novel, *Avenues by Train*, recently published by Cassava Republic Press, is currently on the shortlist for the Republic of Consciousness Prize (UK). His work has been published in Weaver Press anthologies, *Johannesburg Review of Books*, *Africa Is A Country*, *Kwani?*, *Short Story Day Africa*, *New Frame*, *Chimurenga Chronic* and *Mail & Guardian*. He has been a guest speaker at the Open Book Festival, *Pa Gya!* and the Gauteng International Book Festival. He is represented by Laxfield Literary Associates.



Annabel Nyongwana is a third year BA Law student and writer, joined by two writing group members Nokukhanya Sibanda and Alyssa Fischer.



Stephen Pentz is a lecturer and academic coordinator for Health Systems Science housed in the Department of Family Medicine and Primary Care at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Stephen was part of a team that developed an undergraduate stream in Health Systems Science (HSS) within the Bachelor of Health Sciences (BHSc), which he currently coordinates and teaches. Alongside HSS, he teaches on a new and innovative 3rd year course in the BHSc, Medical and Health Humanities. All these courses have been designed as writing intensive courses, building learning pathways from 1st to 3rd year, and into postgraduate programmes. He teaches a writing rich module, 'Contemporary Health', in the BHSc HSS Honours programme. Currently, he is working with an interdisciplinary team on a number of new undergraduate courses in the medical degree at Wits (MBBCh); all of which employ a writing intensive pedagogy. The Science & Art of Health & Learning aims to broaden students' understanding of health while using writing as a means of critical thinking in order to later improve clinical reasoning. His on-going PhD is concerned with the integration of medical humanities throughout a medical degree as a means of developing humanistic, resilient, empathic and problem-solving healthcare professionals. His other research interests include historical archival work on South African health systems where he is running a digitising project (Dig-it!) on the National Health Services Commission Report of 1942-1944, housed in the Adler Museum of Medicine.



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Nompumelelo Zodwa Radebe is a Senior Lecturer and Chair of the Department in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of South Africa. Prior to her teaching career, she worked as a researcher for various institutions in South Africa including the University of Pretoria (Centre for Study of AIDS), the Medical Research Council, and the University of Cape Town (Children's Institute). She is a member of the African Decolonial Research Networks (ADERN). In 2017 she was a visiting student researcher at UC Berkeley in the Department of Ethnic Studies. In 2021 she won an award in Teaching and Learning Festival at the University of South Africa on curriculum transformation. She is a fellow for the Teaching Advancement at Universities (TAU) which is part of the Ministerial Statement on the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP). Her publications include a co-authored book titled *Still to be Named: An Exploration of African Epistemologies Using Simphiwe Dana's Selected Works* and an edited book titled: *Azibuye Emasisweni: Reclaiming our Space and Centering our Knowledge*, edited by Zethu Cakata, Nompumelelo Z. Radebe and Magobe B. Ramose. Her research interest is in exploring African epistemology to expand on theories that address global challenges. Drawing from her anthropological expertise, she uses isiZulu to theorise and provide evidence of the African ways of knowing and being in the world.



Jaki Seroke studied with UNISA and completed a Corporate Strategy Programme, and was awarded a Certificate in Strategic Management and an Industrial Marketing Certificate within the Management Studies Programme. He studied with UNISA for a Bachelors degrees, majoring in English Literature and Literary Theory. He is also a 'prison graduate' of Robben Island maximum prison, for his leadership activities in the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. Seroke worked for Ravan Press and co-founded Skotaville Publishers and has authored his memoirs and a volume of poetry.



Dr Jennifer Sweeney-Risko is the Director of the Writing Center and Literature Faculty at Bard Early College-Cleveland. She is also the Program Assistant for the Center for Liberal Arts and Sciences Pedagogy and heads the Open Society University Network's Tutoring Center working group. Her research interests include trauma-informed teaching, diversity and inclusion in higher education, and writing-rich pedagogies. She has been published in Australian Feminist Studies, Interdisciplinary Literary Studies, and Symploke.



Philippa Yaa de Villiers is a writer and performance artist who performs her work nationally and internationally. Her poetry appears in many magazines and anthologies, and she is also known for her autobiographical one-woman show, *Original Skin*. She has three collections, *Taller than Buildings*, *The Everyday Wife*(winner of the 2011 Sala award) and *ice cream headache in my bone*. Most recently she contributed essays to *Creative Practice: On Making and Meaning* (Dryad Press) and *Notes from the Body: Illness, Health, Trauma* (UKZN press) and co-edited *Keorapetse Kgositsile's Collected Poems 1967-2018* (University of Nebraska Press). She teaches on the MA programme and convenes the Honours Long Essay, Writing Theory and Praxis and Writing Poetry courses. She serves on the African Poetry Book Fund editorial board.



Scenes from the 2023 Wits Writing Festival
Photography by Mzwanele Tshisonga

Imprint

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WITS WRITING CENTRE

*“Writing and reading
sit like anchors in my daily practice.
Each nurtures the other,
helping me to connect to the world
and with myself in new ways.”*

(Nedine Moonsamy)